



GOVERNOR PETE WILSON

August 12, 1997

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Principles for Agreement on Bay - Delta Standards (Accord) signed by California and the federal government in 1994 is regarded throughout California as a hallmark of state, federal and stakeholder cooperation. It is with that same spirit that the vested groups have undertaken the task of attaining the goals of the CALFED Bay - Delta Program. Our mutual objective is to find permanent and equitable solutions to the water supply, water quality, and environmental problems facing the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta Estuary, a region critical to the water needs of 22 million Californians.

However, recent actions by the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on the fishery flow provisions of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act of 1992 (CVPIA) imperil the Accord. Indeed, these proposed actions threaten the very viability of the CALFED process.

The willingness of the California urban and agricultural water users to support the Delta Accord stemmed from their desire for certainty and reliability in their water supplies. They believed that the commitments made in the Accord by the federal signatories would guarantee certainty and reliability, at a substantial but defined cost in water, until a permanent solution was chosen. Central to the promise of certainty and reliability was the Accord's dedication of up to 1.1 million acre-feet for Delta species and habitat needs and the understanding that no additional water would be required of the export projects for such purposes while the principles established by the Accord remained in place.

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However, on June 24, 1997, the Department of the Interior proposal for management of Central Valley Project water pursuant to CVPIA Section 3406(b)(2) clearly states that USBR and USFWS intend to dedicate Central Valley Project water above the 1.1 million acre-feet of water set forth in the Accord, for the proposed purpose of "additional Delta fishery benefits." This action could result in the loss to California's urban and agricultural water users of amounts of water considerably in excess of the up to 1.1 million acre-feet already dedicated to environmental purposes by the Accord and the implementing State plan. "No net loss" beyond that specified in the Accord is the most fundamental element of the Accord.

Interior's proposal is at variance with the "deal is a deal" principle which formed the heart of the Accord and convinced California water users who rely on the state and federal export projects to bear the entire burden of meeting Delta water quality standards. Furthermore, we are not persuaded that there is adequate scientific justification for this additional commitment of water.

Your statement on December 15, 1994, illustrates the vital role that the Accord plays in resolving California's long term water supply needs: "The result is an innovative plan that protects both water quality and water supplies; that enhances environmental and economic progress; and that provides the certainty necessary for water users to plan well into the future." The key word in that statement is "certainty," a principle which now is in danger of being violated.

It is critical that the CALFED process stay on course and not be delayed or diverted by disputes such as this one concerning CVPIA implementation. It is imperative that the proposed federal action be reconciled with the spirit and commitment of the Accord. With that goal in mind, I am convinced that this impasse can be resolved without jeopardizing the progress and outcome of the CALFED Bay - Delta Program.

I urge you to join with me in demonstrating our mutual commitment to the CALFED process by extending the Delta Accord for one year to make it concurrent with the State's implementing water quality plan and water rights decision, and directing the involved federal agencies to complete their work on Phase II by September 1998.

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The environmental health of the Bay-Delta and the economic well-being of the State are dependent on successful and timely completion of the CALFED process. Therefore, I respectfully request, as well, that you direct the Department of the Interior to implement the CVPIA within the context of the Accord and the CALFED framework agreement. In the CALFED program, we have laid a course to a permanent resolution of California's water wars. To breach this agreement now -- as the proposed USFWS fishery flow levels would do -- would be unfathomable given the years of cooperative effort behind us and the prospect of solutions only a year away.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pete" and last name "Wilson" clearly distinguishable.

cc: The Honorable Bruce Babbitt

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